A CROSS-CULTURAL AND CROSS-GENDER COMPARISON OF ATTITUDES TO PLAGIARISM: THE CASE OF MALAYSIAN AND AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of a study which sought to distinguish attitudinal differences to the issue of plagiarism among Malaysian (n=105) and Australian (n=96) undergraduate business students. The results show that national culture and gender influence attitudes to plagiarism. The Malaysian students generally reported greater propensity to plagiarise because their peers were perceived to be doing so, and because of excessive academic workload. In addition, Malaysian males reported a greater propensity to plagiarise than Malaysian females, and offshore Malaysian students were more tempted to plagiarise then their onshore counterparts. Implications for universities are provided.

INTRODUCTION

Academics in higher education have shown increasing concern with the issue of academic integrity (or lack thereof) in recent years. Research indicates that the incidence of dishonesty at university is extensive and increasing. The extent can be gauged from numerous studies. McCabe (2005), in a study of 50,000 undergraduate students on more than 60 US campuses, found that 70 percent admitted to cheating in some form. Another study indicated 73 percent of university students reporting instances of serious cheating on written work in high school, while 53 percent of undergraduates and 35 percent of postgraduates said they cheated on written assignments (Academic Misconduct Major Problem in Canada, Study Finds 2006). Mangan (2006) described a study which found that 56 percent of postgraduate business students had cheated during their course. Other recent studies have noted the incidence of cheating at university ranging from 50 percent of students (Park 2003) to around 75 percent (Chapman et al. 2004; Pickard 2006; Smyth & Davis 2004). On the issue of the increasing incidence of cheating, longitudinal comparisons have found significant increases. For example, the incidence of 'unpermitted student collaboration' increased from 11 percent in 1963 to 49 percent in 1993 (McCabe 2005). Likewise, separate studies have alluded to similar concerning statistics; for example, 23 percent of students reported cheating in 1941, 64 percent in 1964, and 76 percent in 1980 (Kisamore et al. 2007). This increase has been largely attributed to technology, in that it is increasingly easy for students to plagiarise from the internet (Born 2003; Lathrop & Foss 2000).

This study attempts to disaggregate the cross-cultural and cross-gender influences that manifest in differences in attitudes to plagiarism. The following section examines the relevant literature in the academic area. The research design and method of the present study is then outlined. This is followed

by an analysis of research results. Finally, the findings are discussed in light of the existing literature, and implications for universities are provided.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of the literature, which follows, focuses on the main elements of the present study. Firstly, the literature on academic integrity and plagiarism is examined. Secondly, demographic influences on the propensity to plagiarise are listed. Finally, the impact of cultural values on plagiarism is reported.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

According to the Center for Academic Integrity (CAI) (http://www.academicintegrity.org/index.php) and Curtin University (Plagiarism 2005), the issue of academic integrity is expounded in a commitment to such fundamental values as honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and transparency. Numerous examples exist of how academic integrity may be compromised, including copying from others in exams, cheat notes in exams, unpermitted collaboration in course work, submitting an identical item of work more than once, and failing to acknowledge the work of others in course assignments. The final example of academic integrity is generally called 'plagiarism' (Hayes & Introna 2005).

Plagiarism has been variously described as "using the work of others without acknowledging your source of information or inspiration" (Cottrell 2003, p.133), and "the unauthorized and/or unacknowledged use of another's words, thoughts, or writing" (Samson & Radloff 1992, p.18). As such, plagiarism may include the use of exact phrases from articles or books; using other people's ideas or theories; or, too closely paraphrasing, in each case without stating from where the words, phrases, or ideas came (Cottrell 2003). Plagiarism also includes self-plagiarism, or "submitting one's own previously assessed or published work for assessment or publication elsewhere, without appropriate acknowledgement" (Plagiarism 2005, p.1)

Plagiarism is a serious matter in higher education because it is considered to be both unethical and illegal; unethical since the aim is to receive undue credit for work that does not belong to the individual, and illegal since published work is often protected by copyright (Samson & Radloff 1992). Indeed, in following this line, Park (2003, p.472) defined plagiarism as "literary theft, stealing (by copying) the words or ideas of someone else"; and Posner (2007, p.33) as "fraudulent copying". Furthermore, from a university's perspective, plagiarism can compromise the integrity of awards, and even damage national and international reputations (Plagiarism 2005).

In regard to the literature on the question of why students plagiarise, a number of reasons have been proffered. Some scholars suggest that many students are ignorant of the plagiarism concept, or negligent in their writing, and that they plagiarise without intent to deceive (Carroll 2002; Park 2003; Harris 2001; Posner 2007). For example, McCabe (2005) found that 77 percent of students reported that they did not consider internet plagiarism to be a serious offence. Likewise, Harris (2001) reported on a study which found that 65 percent of respondents demonstrated lack of understanding of plagiarism. Other scholars have argued that poor time management by students, and the submission of multiple items of course work falling due at the same time, are also contributing factors (Lim & See 2001; Lambert et al. 2003). Still others contend that many students do intend to deceive, and that this is related to the low risk of being caught (Lathrop & Foss 2000; Phillips & Horton 2000), the perception that there are high levels of cheating among peers (Iyer & Eastman 2006), or the weakness of individual students (Posner 2007).

Demographics and Plagiarism

Several demographic characteristics have been associated with incidences of plagiarism. For example, males and younger students have been found to indulge in plagiarist activities more than females and older students (Caruana et al. 2000; Davis & Ludvigson 1995; Harris 2001; Kisamore et al. 2007; Nonis & Swift 2001; Phillips & Horton 2000).

Cultural Values and Plagiarism

Plagiarism at university, then, is inherently an ethical issue (Samson & Radloff 1992), in which culture is well recognised as one of the most important variables influencing attitudes, beliefs, and actions (Christie et al 2003; Ghosh et al 1997; Hayes & Introna 2005; Singhapakdi et al 1994). The term 'cultural relativism' suggests that ethical principles differ among cultures; what is considered morally right in one culture, may be denounced as wrong in another (Donaldson & Werhane 1996).

In general, researchers have found Western cultures to be based on similar ethical principles. For example, Small (1992) found that Australians, Americans, and Israelis shared similar values in their attitudes towards business ethics. Likewise, Whipple and Swords (1992) found their British and American respondents to exhibit similar ethical views in a business setting; Lysonski and Gaidis (1991) found similarity between business students in the United States, Denmark, and New Zealand; and, Abratt et al (1992) found that Australian and South African managers displayed similar ethical beliefs.

However, when Western cultures are compared to others, stark differences in ethical attitudes emerge. For example, Nyaw and Ng's (1994) study of business students in Canada, Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan found distinct cultural differences. Ahmed et al. (2003) studied the ethics and moral judgments of Chinese, Egyptian, Finnish, Korean, Russian, and American business students, and also found distinct variation related to cultural differences. Likewise, Christie et al (2003), in their study of business managers in India, Korea, and the United States, found that national culture has a strong influence on ethical attitudes.

In addition, and unlike Western cultures, Asian cultures do not neatly cluster together in terms of their patterns of ethical attitudes. For example, Nyaw and Ng's (1994) study of business students in Canada, Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan found that the Japanese, Hong Kong, and Taiwanese students were quite different in their ethical orientations. Likewise, Fritzsche et al (1995) found ethical attitude differences between Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese managers.

In order to compare the cultures of the two countries represented in the present study, Hofstede's (1980) cultural topology was used as a useful framework (see Table 1). However, the two dimensions of uncertainty avoidance and masculinity were not used for three reasons; firstly, the countries represented in the study are similar on both of these dimensions; secondly, the functional application of the two dimensions is highly questionable (Newman & Nollen 1996; Punnett & Withane 1990; Smith et al 1996); and thirdly, Christie et al (2003) found mixed results for these two dimensions in their cross-cultural study of ethical attitudes.

Focusing, then, on the dimensions of individualism and power distance leads to a number of propositions linking these cultural dimensions to ethical attitudes and actions. Firstly, people from low individualism cultures (i.e., collectivists) perceive themselves far more in group terms and to subordinate themselves to the group, than people from high individualism cultures (Lu et al 1999). As

a result, collectivists tend to accept the ethical actions established as normal within their societies, whereas individualists are more prone to question those actions. This reasoning leads Swaidan and Hayes (2005) to conclude that individualists are more sensitive to ethical issues than collectivists. Secondly, people from high power distance cultures tend to look to superiors for ethical guidance, as opposed to low power distance people who tend to look to themselves or their peers (Blodgett et al 2001; Christie et al 2003; Thorne & Saunders 2002). For instance, Lu et al (1999) found that high power distance people were less likely to challenge the ethical principles underlying the actions of superiors. This leads to the greater likelihood, in high power distance cultures, of subordinates performing unethical actions in response to pressure from superiors (Swaidan & Hayes 2005).

TABLE 1: CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

	Individualism	Power Distance	Uncertainty Avoidance	Masculinity
Highest score	91	104	112	95
Australia	90	36	51	61
Malaysia	26	104	36	50
Lowest score	6	11	8	5

(Source : Hofstede 1980)

The above argument takes the view that plagiarism is unethical, and that students deliberately attempt to deceive. However, as a number of scholars have highlighted (see for example, Carroll 2002; Park 2003; Harris 2001; Posner 2007), many Western students are ignorant of the plagiarism concept, or negligent in their writing, and hence, they plagiarise without intent to deceive. In an Eastern context, there are also additional mitigating reasons in answer to the question of why students plagiarise. For example, Pennycook (1996, cited in Hayes & Introna 2005) argued that Chinese students perceive the use of another author's words as a sign of respect, and that good students should never challenge those in positions of authority, such as teachers. Likewise, Sowden (2005) makes the point that Chinese academic norms are the result of a long history of reproducing Confucian teachings in civil service exams, which has manifested as a contemporary Chinese education system founded on memorization, rote learning, and repetition (Holmes 2004).

Some scholars have argued that Hofstede's (1980) study is dated, and hence, may now have outlived its usefulness as an analytical tool (see, for example, McSweeney 2002). However, Hofstede's cultural dimensions continue to be used extensively for academic research (e.g., Abeysekera 2008; Moores 2008). Moreover, recent work on Malaysian cultural values would suggest that 'collectivism' and 'high power distance' are persistent norms that continue to direct attitudes and behaviour (see, for example, Bochner 1994; Kuen & Voon 2007)

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample consisted of a total of 201 undergraduate business students studying at an Australian university. This included students studying onshore at the Australian campus, which consisted of both local Australian students (n=96) and international Malaysian students (n=34). In addition, the sample included students studying at two offshore campuses of the same Australian university in Malaysia

(n=71). Students were in the second year of study of a three year degree program. As such, all students had been inculcated with the university's definition of plagiarism, as well as the requirements to avoid such accusation and the penalties that might be incurred if caught plagiarising. A profile of the combined samples is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2: PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

		Australia	Malaysia Onshore	Malaysia Offshore
Total	n	96	34	71
Gender	Male	43%	53%	51%
	Female	57%	47%	49%
Age	<25	85%	100%	97%
	25-34	9%		2%
	35-44	6%		1%
	45-55			

Instrument

A survey incorporating 11 items adapted from Harris (2001) was used. Respondents were assured anonymity and participation was voluntary (no-one refused to participate). The respondents completed the survey by indicating on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 'strongly agree' (1) to 'strongly disagree' (7).

The 11 items of the survey were:
Q1. Sometimes I feel tempted to plagiarise because so many other students are doing it.
Q2. I believe I clearly understand the concept of plagiarism and how to avoid it.
Q3. Plagiarism is as bad as stealing an exam and memorising the answers.
Q4. If my friend gives me permission to use his or her assignment, I don't think there is anything wrong with that.
Q5. Plagiarism is sometimes unavoidable when a student has too many assignments to complete.
Q6. The penalties for plagiarism should be lenient, especially for international students who are not used to the Australian system.
Q7. If a student buys or downloads material from the internet and submits it as their own work, they should be expelled from the university.
Q8. Plagiarism is against my ethical values.
Q9. I do not think plagiarism is anything like stealing because no material goods are taken.
Q10. It is acceptable to use something I have written previously for an assignment in another unit because you cannot plagiarise yourself.
Q11. Lecturers always talk about plagiarism, but rarely enforce it.

Analysis

Mean scores, ANOVA analysis, regression, and effect size were used to analyse the quantitative differences between the groups, and the statistical significance of such differences.

RESULTS

Tables 3 and 4 demonstrate that the variation in responses to 10 of the 11 items in the survey was statistically significant using one-way ANOVA analysis. However, it was considered that at least some of this significance might be attributable to the "cultural response set tendency" (Matsumoto 1994, p.33) among Asian respondents when answering instruments designed around a Likert-type scale (see for example, Lee & Green 1991; Stening & Everett 1984). Consequently, and following the work of Cohen (2000), the 'effect size index (d)' was calculated according to the equation (see Table 3):

$$d = \frac{m_a - m_b}{SD}$$

where m_a, m_b =   Means of the two responses

      SD   =   Standard deviation (largest)

Cohen (2000) suggested that if:

d = 0.2   Effect size is small

d = 0.5   Effect size is moderate

d = 0.8   Effect size is large

TABLE 3: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (NATIONALITY) & EFFECT SIZE INDEX

Nationality		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
Australian	**Mean**	6.23	2.53	2.68	5.15	5.57	5.48	3.44	2.66	5.40	3.21	4.92
	N	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96
	SD	1.23	1.77	1.63	1.58	1.61	1.62	1.97	1.74	1.51	1.75	1.35
Malaysian	**Mean**	4.89	3.20	3.38	4.54	3.87	3.32	4.19	3.40	4.56	2.61	4.66
	N	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105
	SD	1.58	1.62	1.76	1.73	1.97	1.86	1.85	1.62	1.74	1.53	1.40
Effect size (d)		0.85	0.38	0.39	0.35	0.86	1.16	0.38	0.43	0.48	0.34	0.19
		L	S	S	S	L	L	S	S-M	S-M	S	S

TABLE 4: ANOVA ANALYSIS – NATIONALITY (AUSTRALIAN-MALAYSIAN)

	Sum of Squares	F	Sig.
Q1	**90.513**	**44.630**	**.000**
Q2	**22.428**	**7.848**	**.006**
Q3	**24.846**	**8.617**	**.004**
Q4	**18.233**	**6.621**	**.011**
Q5	**145.999**	**44.724**	**.000**
Q6	**232.972**	**76.133**	**.000**
Q7	**28.433**	**7.796**	**.006**
Q8	**27.741**	**9.878**	**.002**
Q9	**34.876**	**13.026**	**.000**
Q10	**17.982**	**6.716**	**.010**
Q11	3.378	1.783	.183

The effect size index indicates that only items Q1, Q5, and Q6 are significant. In addition, regression analysis was used to further test the significance of the data (see Table 5). Again, the results indicate the significance of only Q1, Q5, and Q6. This analysis indicates that the Malaysian respondents were:
- More prone to plagiarise because of the perceived actions of peers (Q1)
- More prone to plagiarise because of too much work (Q5)
- More in the belief that international students should be treated leniently (Q6)

Item 11 was not statistically significant in terms of different response. This result indicates that there is a moderately held belief that the university makes much of the issue of plagiarism, but does not extend sufficient energy to stringently enforce the policies.

TABLE 5: REGRESSION ANALYSIS – NATIONALITY (AUSTRALIAN-MALAYSIAN)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
(Constant)	2.535	.216		11.709	.000
Q1	**-.104**	**.021**	**-.328**	**-5.008**	**.000**
Q2	.015	.020	.053	.775	.439
Q3	.009	.022	.032	.420	.675
Q4	.008	.019	.027	.434	.665
Q5	**-.035**	**.019**	**-.139**	**-1.880**	**.062**
Q6	**-.103**	**.017**	**-.423**	**-6.147**	**.000**
Q7	.015	.015	.057	.953	.342
Q8	-.019	.020	-.065	-.923	.357
Q9	.027	.021	.090	1.294	.197
Q10	.007	.019	.022	.343	.732
Q11	-.018	.021	-.048	-.844	.400

a Dependent Variable: Nationality

Tables 6 and 7 show the responses of the Malaysian sample grouped by location. Some respondents were 'onshore' (n=34), in which case they were studying at the Australian campus of the university. Other respondents were 'offshore' (n=71), in which case they were studying at two offshore campuses of the university, both located in Malaysia. The tables highlight only one item of significant difference:

Q1. Sometimes I feel tempted to plagiarise because so many other students are doing it.

This would suggest that Malaysian students studying offshore are more prone to plagiarise because their peers are perceived to be doing so.

TABLE 6: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (MALAYSIAN ON-/OFFSHORE)

Location		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
Mal Onshore	**Mean**	**5.56**	3.38	3.50	4.18	3.76	3.18	3.82	3.32	4.71	2.41	4.91
	N	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
	SD	1.35	1.63	1.71	1.77	2.02	1.93	1.86	1.70	1.77	1.37	1.48
Mal Offshore	**Mean**	**4.56**	3.11	3.32	4.72	3.92	3.39	4.37	3.44	4.49	2.70	4.54
	N	71	71	71	71	71	71	71	71	71	71	71
	SD	1.59	1.62	1.79	1.69	1.96	1.83	1.83	1.58	1.74	1.59	1.35

TABLE 7: ANOVA ANALYSIS – LOCATION (MALAYSIAN ON-/OFFSHORE)

	Sum of Squares	F	Sig.
Q1	**22.781**	**9.866**	**.002**
Q2	1.672	.635	.427
Q3	.713	.228	.634
Q4	6.750	2.292	.133
Q5	.523	.133	.716
Q6	1.092	.314	.576
Q7	6.770	1.996	.161
Q8	.294	.112	.739
Q9	1.042	.341	.561
Q10	1.966	.840	.361
Q11	3.260	1.676	.198

Tables 8 and 9 demonstrate no significant differences in the responses to all items by the Australian male and female groups.

TABLE 8: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (AUSTRALIAN GENDER)

Gender		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
Aus Male	**Mean**	6.17	2.41	2.80	4.95	5.22	5.17	3.32	2.63	5.15	3.37	4.80
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
	SD	1.32	1.58	1.72	1.60	1.67	1.70	2.13	1.66	1.57	1.73	1.49
Aus Female	**Mean**	6.27	2.62	2.58	5.29	5.84	5.71	3.53	2.67	5.58	3.09	5.00
	N	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
	SD	1.16	1.90	1.57	1.57	1.53	1.54	1.86	1.82	1.45	1.77	1.25

TABLE 9: ANOVA ANALYSIS – AUSTRALIAN GENDER

	Sum of Squares	F	Sig.
Q1	.244	.161	.689
Q2	.973	.310	.579
Q3	1.169	.440	.509
Q4	2.710	1.083	.301
Q5	8.938	3.552	.063
Q6	6.808	2.632	.108
Q7	1.038	.265	.608
Q8	.035	.011	.915
Q9	4.455	1.970	.164
Q10	1.776	.579	.448
Q11	.894	.488	.487

Tables 10 and 11 show that the responses of the Malaysian male and female groups were significantly different on two items:

Q1. Sometimes I feel tempted to plagiarise because so many other students are doing it.
Q6. The penalties for plagiarism should be lenient, especially for international students who are not used to the Australian system.

These response differentials indicate two important points. Firstly, Malaysian males are more prone to plagiarise because their peers are perceived as doing so; and secondly, Malaysian males favour a more lenient attitude by the university when dealing with allegations of plagiarism for international students.

TABLE 10: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (MALAYSIAN GENDER)

Gender		**Q1**	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	**Q6**	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
Malaysia Male	**Mean**	**4.43**	3.39	3.44	4.26	3.81	**2.96**	4.20	3.39	4.57	2.54	4.56
	N	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54
	SD	1.47	1.55	1.75	1.76	1.94	1.76	1.85	1.38	1.59	1.49	1.46
Malaysia Female	**Mean**	**5.37**	3.00	3.31	4.84	3.92	**3.71**	4.18	3.41	4.55	2.69	4.76
	N	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
	SD	1.56	1.69	1.78	1.65	2.02	1.90	1.87	1.85	1.90	1.58	1.34

TABLE 11: ANOVA ANALYSIS – MALAYSIAN GENDER

	Sum of Squares	F	Sig.
Q1	**23.503**	**10.209**	**.002**
Q2	3.967	1.520	.220
Q3	.448	.143	.706
Q4	8.942	3.059	.083
Q5	.299	.076	.783
Q6	**14.476**	**4.328**	**.040**
Q7	.019	.006	.940
Q8	.014	.005	.943
Q9	.016	.005	.942
Q10	.584	.248	.619
Q11	1.147	.584	.447

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate differences in attitudes to plagiarism across different cultural and gender groupings. The study found a number of significant differences in attitudes.

Firstly, Malaysian students demonstrated a greater propensity to plagiarise because their peers were perceived to be doing so. This may be substantially associated with the collectivist cultural values held by Malaysian society. Collectivists tend to accept the ethical actions of peers as an established norm.

Secondly, Malaysian students demonstrated a greater propensity to plagiarise because of too much work. Multiple assignments due for submission at the same time, and less English language proficiency than Australian students, would most likely underpin this finding.

Thirdly, Malaysian students reported a general belief that the university should be lenient with them on the issue of plagiarism because they were international students. Again, there would appear to be a substantial link to Malaysian cultural values. In high power distance cultures, such as Malaysia, hierarchy, patronage, and relativism predominate (Egan 2007). In this case, the university is viewed

as having a paternalistic role, which does not equate to treating all students equally, as is the view held by the Australian students.

Fourthly, gender differences were found, but only among the Malaysian sample. Malaysian male respondents expressed a greater propensity to plagiarise than Malaysian females.

Fifthly, differences were also found between Malaysian students studying onshore at the Australian campus of the university, and those studying at two offshore partner campuses. Malaysian offshore students reported a greater propensity to plagiarise than Malaysian onshore students for the reason that their peers were doing so. This most likely indicates that offshore plagiarism is more prevalent, but detected less frequently, than is the case onshore.

Finally, the results of the present study would suggest that the expressed propensity to plagiarise was based more on deceit than innocent ignorance. Among all groups, there was generally a good understanding of the concept of plagiarism (Q2=low). There was also an understanding that a friend's permission to use their work did not circumvent plagiarism (Q4=low), as well as a recognition that plagiarism equates to stealing, albeit not involving material goods (Q9=low). It would appear that the propensity to plagiarise is firmly based on deceit, and due to the perception of peer action and excessive workload.

The results of the present study in no way assert a superiority of Western ethical standards in business. High profile incidents of immoral behaviour in Western firms in recent years attest to serious deficiencies in ethical underpinnings in the Western business context. This is exemplified by high-profile corporate collapses, such as Emron and WorldCom in the US, and HIH and OneTel in Australia. Prior to these corporate collapses, Australia had a considerable recent proliferation of individual fraudsters, in the ilk of Bond Corporation's Alan Bond, Rothwell's Laurie Connell, and Qintex's Christopher Skase (A Chorus Line of Crooks, 2003; Barry, 2000; McIlwraith, 2000). The common thread linking these fallen entrepreneurial high-flyers is deception, falsification of financial information, and relationship manipulation to serve their own interests. However, what the results of the present study do indicate is that cultural value systems substantially impact on relative propensities to plagiarise, given that other contextual variables, such as excess workload and peer behaviour, are perceived to be present.

IMPLICATIONS FOR UNIVERSITIES

The present study has raised several issues that should be of concern to universities that host international students, and/or conduct offshore transnational programs.

Firstly, universities need to be cognisant of the link between policies and actions. The students, irrespective of groupings, reported that university provides much warning about plagiarism, but that there is perhaps insufficient enforcement to reinforce the message (Q11=moderate). Universities must be stringent in their enforcement of policy, particularly since perceived peer incidence plays such a significant part in influencing an international student's propensity to plagiarise.

Secondly, more could be done to better coordinate assignment submissions. Students faced with having to submit multiple written assignments in the same week will be more tempted to plagiarise than if submission deadlines were more spread.

Thirdly, universities operating transnational programs should be aware of the cultural values that impact on attitudes to plagiarism. Collectivist/high power distance cultures (and particularly males

within those cultures) appear to be more prone to plagiarise unless university policies are overt and stringently enforced.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has at least two specific limitations. Firstly, since the study sample was restricted to business students, it may be inappropriate to generalize the results to other student groups. Secondly, as a number of scholars have suggested (see for example, Fritzsche et al 1995; Nyaw & Ng 1994), Asian cultures do not cluster in terms of ethical attitudes. As such, the attitudes of the Malaysian respondents in the present study may not necessarily correspond with similar attitudes of respondents from other Asian countries.

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